

A WORTHY ADDITION TO THE WOMEN'S GAME



By Lorin Anderson, *Founder*

I realize that in the grand scheme of golf competitions the inaugural United States Women's Senior Open probably didn't generate as much buzz as one Tiger Woods birdie, but for me it was an amazing addition to the USGA competition lineup because I never thought I'd see the day. This was the feel-good addition

to the 2018 golf schedule and the competitors were excited, grateful and determined to put on a good show. It was especially gratifying to see Proponent Group member **Jamie Fischer** play very well and earn a tie for 12th! It was also fun to see **Laura Davies** take home the trophy and the biggest chunk of the \$1 million purse with an outstanding display of golf at age 54.

These women have worked extremely hard for everything they have ever gotten from the game and often with minimal fanfare or appreciation. So, this new celebration of the women's game that included 48 current teaching and club professionals in the field of 120 was a very big deal. This was a celebration of the women who have made golf their lifelong career and in the process contended with a "good old boys" network that hasn't always been accepting of their successes.

To this day Proponent Group fields too many calls from women members who are dealing with a variety of discriminatory issues where they work. Anecdotally, it seems that the industry is becoming more enlightened to the benefits of promoting diversity among its ranks, but we're definitely not where we need to get to just yet.

I'm also concerned that young women are not coming into the game to teach at the rate they were 25 years ago when my wife Cheryl began teaching golf. In the mid-90s more than 85 women professionals taught in just the Metropolitan PGA Section alone. Today that number seems to be diminished. It could be for a variety of reasons including the fact that less golf is being played, facilities have closed and young women have more opportunities to continue playing after college including a much more robust Symetra Tour. All of these may have combined to dissuade more young women from deciding to become golf instructors.

Hopefully, future factors will make it more enticing for more young women to join the industry as more diversity in our ranks is beneficial for the game's future.

As we celebrate the addition of the U.S. Senior Women's Open to the calendar, remember how hard these women have worked to make the game more inclusive and accessible. They have done this while typically enjoying fewer competitive opportunities and less respect for their teaching and playing accomplishments. I applaud all of the women professionals who are now in their 50s or beyond and have stayed in the game. They simply love the game and they love helping their students. We have all benefitted in that they have made the game more accessible for women amateurs and for all the junior girls who now have these successful women as role models to inspire them.

Congrats to the USGA for adding this wonderful competition and thanks to the talented golfers who participated. We applaud the women who have added so much to golf by choosing to make it their careers. **PG**

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